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SUBJECT: CZECH REPUBLIC SIGNS NUCLEAR FUEL REPATRIATION
AGREEMENT WITH USG

¶1. Ambassador Graber and Czech Minister of Industry and Trade Martin Riman signed the "Agreement Concerning Cooperation in the Area of Countering the Proliferation of Nuclear Materials and Technologies" (a.k.a. nuclear fuel repatriation agreement) on September 17 at the Ministry of Industry and Trade. This Agreement provides a legal framework and tax exemptions for the U.S. National Nuclear Safety Administration's activities in the Czech Republic, including the transfer to Russia of research and test reactor highly enriched uranium (HEU) supplied by the former Soviet Union and the Russian Federation. The program also provides technical assistance to convert still-operating reactors from the use of HEU fuel to low enriched uranium fuel.

¶2. The Department of Energy has been in consultations with the Czech Republic on this project since 2000, with significant work beginning in 2004. The Czech Republic has completed the return of fresh HEU, and is scheduled to begin the more difficult process of returning spent HEU later this year. The U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Safety Administrations' Russian Research Reactor Fuel Return program advances U.S. nuclear non-proliferation objectives by reducing the threat from and preventing illicit trafficking in weapons-usable nuclear material.
GRABER